

IN THE CLAIMS

A presentation of all of the pending Claims with their current status indicated follows.

1. (Cancelled).

2. (Currently Amended) [~~The method of claim 1 further comprising~~] A method for manufacturing shot useful for discharge from a shotgun comprising:

providing a source of molten steel having an initial carbon content;

subjecting the molten steel to an atomization process so as to produce substantially spheroidal pellets;

annealing the pellets in a decarburizing atmosphere effective to decrease the carbon content in at least a surface layer of each of the pellets;

cooling the pellets, whereupon, on average the surface layer has a median Knoop hardness of less than 225 at 21°C; and

packaging the pellets in packages labeled as for use in loading shotshells.

3. (Currently Amended) [~~The method of claim 1 further comprising~~] A method for manufacturing shot useful for discharge from a shotgun comprising:

providing a source of molten steel having an initial carbon content;

subjecting the molten steel to an atomization process so as to produce substantially spheroidal pellets;

annealing the pellets in a decarburizing atmosphere effective to decrease the carbon content in at least a surface layer of each of the pellets;

cooling the pellets, whereupon, on average the surface layer has a median Knoop hardness of less than 225 at 21°C; and

loading the pellets into shotshells.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [1] 2 wherein the atomization process comprises water atomization.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [1] 2 wherein the surface layer is at least